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the self, or at best considers it merely an inference. Pluralism takes the existence of the self as an initial explanatory hypothesis based on the concrete realization of our own existence. From this it works outwards to an explanatory account of continuity and causality, categories which for new realism are merely descriptive. *The Social Nature of Thinking* (pp. 274-295): J. E. CREIGHTON. — Maintains that "the notion of the isolated individual is as inadequate and misleading when taken as a basis of logic as by general assent it is acknowledged to be when employed to explain the moral, political, or religious experience of the individual." Thinking is a joint enterprise at every stage of its procedure, and is comprehensible only in the light of its social relations. It presupposes an organic relation of the individual mind to other minds and also the relation of the individual mind to the external order of nature. *Reviews of Books*: John Laird, *Problems of the Self*: R. F. A. HOERNLÉ. William M. Salter, *Nietzsche, The Thinker*: WILBUR M. URBAN. Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*: NATHANIEL SCHMIDT. Henry Maudsley, *Organic to Human-Psychological and Sociological*: J. E. BOODIN. *Notices of New Books. Summaries of Articles. Notes.*

Parker, G. H. *The Elementary Nervous System*. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1919. Pp. 229. \$2.50.

NOTES AND NEWS

A MEETING of the Aristotelian Society was held in London on January 6, 1919, President Wildon Carr in the chair. Mr. C. D. Broad read a paper on "Mechanical Explanation and its Alternative."

Controversies between mechanistic and non-mechanistic biologists suffer, he said, from a lack of clear definition of what the opponents mean by mechanism. The case is also prejudiced by confining the controversy to biology and not raising the same question about chemistry and other advanced sciences.

Mechanism must mean at *least* obedience to the laws of motion or some substitute which reduces indefinitely near to them for moderate velocities. This condition is summed up by the form of Lagrange's Equations and the form of the function T and the nature of the variables in it. But this is never a sufficient condition of mechanism; for it leaves open to the functions on the right-hand side of Lagrange's equations all sorts of forms and all sorts of variables. According to the different limitations imposed on their functions and their variables, different senses of mechanism emerge. Five senses are distinguished; the two least rigid are "macroscopic," the remain-

ing three are "microscopic" in Lorentz's sense of these words. If the more rigid forms hold at all they must hold microscopically, for it is certain that they do not hold macroscopally.

Microscopic explanations need not be mechanistic. Only the less rigid forms of mechanism are necessary for scientific explanation, and they are not necessary for any profound metaphysical reason but because (*a*) we can only accurately measure directly geometrical magnitudes, and (*b*) we can not deal with a multitude of complex irreducible laws. Even the most rigid form of mechanism might, however, be true if we carry our microscopic analysis further than it has yet been carried.

The main advantage of pure mechanism would be a unification in our theories of nature. Without it science is perfectly possible, but will take the form of a hierarchy of laws of various degrees of generality; the more special of these will not be deducible from the more general.

When account is taken of secondary qualities it is seen that pure mechanism can not be the whole truth even about the non-mental part of the world. There is no necessary conflict between teleology and mechanism; and the ultimate cause of the special structure of teleological systems is inexplicable with or without mechanism.

The annual meeting of the Western Philosophical Association will be held at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Ia., April 18th and 19th, 1919. In accordance with the plan usually followed by the association, one session will be devoted to the consideration of a single subject. The subject which the executive committee have chosen for this year's discussion is "The Function of Philosophy in Social Reconstruction." At the remaining two sessions an opportunity will be given for members to read and discuss papers on other philosophical subjects.